

The fact is that the vote is your birth-right and it is your voice.

I hope that the Nigerian Government and all of those in the Nigerian diaspora will stand for democracy and the right to an unfettered vote in the Nigerian elections.

### OUR NATION'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHNSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I am going to pause here for 5 seconds, and I will tell you why.

I did that to note something. I did that because I want to note that our Federal Government just spent \$1 million in 5 seconds—\$1 million. By the time I finish this speech, the government will have spent over \$50 million. By the time my colleagues finish their speeches, that figure will be in the hundreds of millions.

As it stands right now, our government is spending \$197,000 per second, which as a recent publication by the America First Policy Institute points out, is faster than the speed of light.

Let's look at this graphic here real quick.

My staff just ran this up on the copy machine because I wanted to blow it up. This is a post by the AFPI. They point out the fastest things on the Earth, and they note that we are actually spending right now faster than the speed of light. The speed of light is 186,282 miles per second. We are spending \$197,000 per second.

Our national debt is well over \$31 trillion right now—\$31 trillion.

Now, if those figures alarm you, Mr. Speaker, you are not alone. Everybody on our side of the aisle is deeply concerned about this. We understand what a risk it is to our national security and to the stability of our constitutional Republic.

□ 1845

However, you won't find anyone—hardly anyone, I think—on the other side of the aisle who understands this or agrees with it. I mean, based upon their voting records, based upon their proposals to continue to raise taxes and raise spending, based upon some of the speeches they gave here on the floor tonight, they don't get it, and neither does the mainstream media. That ought to be of even greater concern to you.

Earlier this month, the Congressional Budget Office released a frightening report. All Members of Congress in a bipartisan fashion met in the congressional auditorium this afternoon to hear the CBO Director relay some of this really frightening information.

It is about our economic outlook. If you haven't heard about it yet, it is because really the media is not covering this. The 24-hour news cycle buries it for the next big thing, but there is hardly anything bigger than this.

Let me give you a couple of the highlights that came out of that briefing this afternoon:

Number one: Net interest on our national debt will reach \$10.5 trillion over the next decade.

Now, I know these numbers are big and it is sort of hard to grasp them, but you think about \$10.5 trillion over the next 10 years. For reference, listen to this: since 1940 the total net interest payments on our national debt has been \$12.9 trillion, adjusted for inflation. Since 1940.

In the next 10 years, we are going to spend \$10.5 trillion just on interest alone. It is staggering. Our national debt is going to reach \$154 trillion by 2053—\$150-plus trillion. That equals \$540,000 per household when you adjust for inflation. That is more than four times the current median household income.

Deficits are going to average—average—\$2 trillion annually, or 6.1 percent of our gross domestic product over the next 10 years. The government had a lower deficit than this every single year from 1945 to 2009. The cost of the annual interest will balloon from \$350 billion to \$1.4 trillion in just a decade. That is 20 cents of every tax dollar that is collected by this Federal Government is going to go to paying interest on America's debt.

Mr. Speaker, we are in uncharted economic waters. We have never seen anything like this. Our country has only faced an economic threat like this during times of war and pandemic. If you only listen to the media and Democrat politicians, all of our colleagues over here, you would think there is really no issue at all.

I mean, the Biden administration continues to portray this rosy outlook. They were saying it today: the state of the economy isn't so bad. We are doing well. We are trending in the right direction, they say. That is absolutely not true.

The CBO, by the way, is a non-partisan entity. They don't choose a side. They just came in and presented the objective facts to Republicans and Democrats because we want to make everybody face this harsh reality.

President Biden has touted that his administration "cut \$1.7 trillion of the deficit." He says that is evidence that he is really serious about the national debt, but that is obviously fiction as well. That reduction naturally occurred with the statutory end of the increased spending that Congress ap-

proved to combat COVID-19. That wasn't because of any shrewd economic policy from the White House. It is exactly the opposite.

Speaking of economic madness, you know, tomorrow the President is expected to release his 2023 budget proposal. It is more than a month late. Every news report, all the early ones, suggest that his budget is replete with trillions of dollars in new taxes, raising taxes in the middle of an inflation crisis that he created; more spending on frivolous, liberal pet policies and projects and no plan at all to reduce the deficit.

For the first time in his Presidency, he won't have a Democrat rubber stamp over here. He won't have the Democrats in charge of this House to go along with that destructive agenda.

Mr. Speaker, the American people made their voices heard when they gave Republicans control of this House, and we are going to do our job. They have entrusted our new majority to provide a much-needed check on the Biden administration, and that starts with the power of the purse.

Over the next few months, the discourse around here is going to intensify. There is going to be some heated debate. It is likely to get off track with squabbles about everything from defense spending to earmarks, but House Republicans will not lose sight through this of the bigger picture. We are going to rein in spending and inflation because we must. We are going to promote responsible budgeting because we must. We are going to chart our country on a course back to fiscal sanity. It is the duty of every Member of this body to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield to a number of my colleagues tonight who will participate in this Special Order hour, talking about lots of important things on the hearts and minds of the American people. I just want to suggest that the debt is one of those.

Mr. Speaker, I yield first to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. MILLER), my dear friend.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JOHNSON for hosting this Special Order.

The American agriculture industry powers our economy and feeds the world, but President Biden wants to burden farmers and landowners with higher taxes and more red tape with his disastrous waters of the United States rule.

Farmers and ranchers do not want to be told how to use and regulate their land by Biden's radical Cabinet Secretaries. I introduced a bill called Define WOTUS Act with Senator BRAUN to protect my fellow farmers and stand against the disastrous Biden EPA, which is working to regulate every pond and puddle in America. Our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and property owners come last in the Biden agenda.

This week, I will proudly stand with House Republicans to pass legislation ending Biden's disastrous WOTUS rule.

We are going to put American farmers first. It is my privilege to advocate for my fellow Illinois farmers on the House Agriculture Committee and represent our needs in Congress.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for highlighting that really important issue. The WOTUS rule has gotten completely out of control.

Mr. Speaker, I yield next to the gentleman from New York (Mr. D'ESPOSITO), one of our new Members to Congress.

Mr. D'ESPOSITO. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that radical criminal justice legislation passed by the Washington, D.C. Council appears to be headed for defeat, thanks to widespread rejection by House Republicans.

The legislation in question, known as the revised Criminal Code Act of 2022, eliminates mandatory minimum sentences for a long list of crimes, while also reducing maximum sentences for things like first-degree burglary, armed burglary, and first-degree sexual assault.

This law being advanced by the far left, D.C. local politicians handcuffs the courts and empowers convicted criminals to get back out on the streets in record time.

Not only is this legislation misguided, but it comes at the height of a crime wave currently ravaging Capitol Hill.

Over the last year, our Nation's Capital has seen a 76 percent increase in carjackings, a 17 percent increase in homicides and a 117 percent uptick in sexual assaults.

To fight this scourge, we need to be taking a harder line on criminals, not coddling them like this justice reform package would do.

When the RCCA came before the House of Representatives for congressional review, House Republicans stood united in our opposition to this proposal. I am glad 31 of our Democratic colleagues did the right thing for the people of Washington, D.C., and crossed the aisle to stand with the Republican Conference in opposing the bill.

Now it appears a bipartisan group from the Senate will be joining myself and our House colleagues to defeat the RCCA, with President Biden also poised to lend his support.

Safeguarding our streets should never be a partisan issue, and common sense must always remain at the forefront of legislators' minds. I am glad such common sense seems to be winning the day in this case.

During my career as an NYPD detective, I served alongside law enforcement professionals of differing political persuasions, religions, and cultural backgrounds. Let me remind everyone that when people call 911, we never ask what political party they are from. What united us as cops was our commitment to serving the people and protecting the public from criminals.

Now, as a Member of Congress, I will continue that service by combating

far-left attacks on our criminal justice system and forcefully reject radical legislation much like the RCCA and the criminal justice reform put in place by Democrats in my home State of New York.

I will always advocate for safe streets and prosperous communities. That is my pledge to you, and that is our House Republican commitment to America.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his service as a police officer, law enforcement, and also now in Congress. We are delighted to have you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield next to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. JOHNSON for leading these opportunities for us to communicate with the American people openly and freely in a more casual, unhurried way of doing so.

It is good to be able to talk about these issues. Hopefully, folks are paying attention. We are just trying to get the truth out and call out the issues that are extremely important to them that we are working on in Congress.

When I get up here, a lot of times I am talking about our food supply and the farmers who grow it—as a Californian, we grow a lot of different crops—the water it takes to grow those crops, our energy, the condition of our energy in this country.

Tonight, I will talk more about our fiscal condition in this Nation and of this government. It is troubling because a recent report issued by the Congressional Budget Office found that the net interest of our national debt—Mr. JOHNSON was talking about that a little bit ago on spending—just the interest payment on our national debt will amount to a \$10.5 trillion burden for our taxpayers over the next decade.

We talk in these 10-year numbers. If you average that out, that is \$1.05 trillion per year just in interest service. For comparison, those interest costs over the previous decade amounted to only \$3 trillion, again, versus \$10.5 trillion for the coming decade. That is crushing on our national budget and crushing on the discretionary portion that we have over that budget.

That is not to take away from the fact that the Federal Government already is taxing and extracts more in taxes from American families than at any point in history.

This kind of payment on interest will devour a lot of our budget if we don't get a handle on this. I shudder to think if interest rates go up much more, the service on that debt becomes that much more extensive. Of course, Federal spending coupled with that is rising at an even higher rate. The increased spending has pushed our national debt over that magic \$31 trillion number, again, that we were speaking about.

As high as this is, it pales in comparison to the United States' unfunded liabilities, which amount to about \$182

trillion. Unfunded liabilities, meaning the debt obligations that do not have sufficient funds set aside to pay them, include Social Security, Medicare, Federal debt held by the public, and Federal employee and veteran benefits. Social Security and Medicare's liabilities add up to \$57 trillion. These numbers clearly show the United States Federal Government is living beyond its means.

Social Security and Medicare are called entitlement programs. Let me stop on that for a moment.

Sometimes that word "entitlement" is thought of as a dirty word, right?

It gets used pretty freely around here.

However, when you are talking about the entitlement as applied to Social Security and Medicare, it is not necessarily a dirty word because the people that paid into them are entitled to draw out from them. That is not a bad word in that sense. They are entitled to what they paid in and the amount that it grew during the time, hopefully, while it was being held for them more or less in trust by the Federal Government.

The CBO, Congressional Budget Office, predicts that Social Security will run out of money in 2033 and Medicare in 2026. The fund will be depleted.

We need to have an honest conversation about these funds, about these programs going forward. No one wants to take away Social Security. Nobody wants to deplete Medicare, but if they are going to be on the rocks in the year 2033 for Social Security, for example, then we better be doing something now. There needs to be an honest, bipartisan discussion about doing so.

What are we going to do to head that off and have the numbers not crunch badly by the time that time comes?

□ 1900

There are ways we can do that, but it is going to take an honest bipartisan discussion, not scaring people saying, oh, Republicans are going to take away Social Security. The President stood right up there and tried to claim that until he had to walk it back just a few weeks ago. There needs to be an honest discussion, not one used as a talking point or a political weapon.

What we have is 47 million retirees in America today, and 40 percent of the 47 million live entirely off Social Security. For these Americans, their benefits being reduced in the future could be disastrous. That is why we have to figure out how to make the fund go beyond 2033 and be sustainable, well, permanently.

If we are going to save these programs for the current and future generations, Congress must act swiftly, honestly with a real debate and set these finances in order and return to the fiscal responsibility that we should have had all along.

As stewards of the public's dollars, it is important that Congress spend the public's money wisely and respectfully. The House must use its powers to allocate government funds in a reasonable,

responsible way. There is a lot of room for debate on how that is, but if we are having an interaction, instead of hurrying through or doing a last minute patch-up at the end of the fiscal year, it is going to be a lot better in the light of day doing so.

The current D.C. model of taxing, borrowing, and spending money that we don't have will saddle our grandchildren with the burden of paying off today's debts. We don't even have to wait for our grandchildren. It is our children. It is us that are still in the work world. We are stuck with this. We have to do better.

Failure to fix Washington, D.C.'s, spending today will mean our children will have to live at lesser standards. We have always aspired that our children should always do a little better than us, to leave something a little better off. Why should they have to live under a worse standard only because we are spending like crazy? They will be saddled with a higher debt, higher taxes, and less opportunity.

America's strength on the world's stage depends on a strong American economy at home. We must get to getting it actually balanced and not take so long to truly balance our budget. It is our responsibility.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for that wise counsel. It is about responsibility, and the gentleman said it so well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF).

Mr. KUSTOFF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for organizing this evening's Special Order. The gentleman is a brilliant orator and brilliant lawyer, and I am proud to serve with him.

Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to speak about one of the biggest challenges facing our country today, and that is our national debt. We have heard about it tonight.

Our national debt today stands at over \$31 trillion. It is really hard to comprehend a number that large even for us who serve in the House of Representatives.

Instead of taking advantage of the record tax revenues that were produced from the Republican-passed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in 2017, Democrats have used the 2 prior years that they had in power when they had the White House, the Senate, and the House of Representatives to spend an unprecedented amount of taxpayer dollars.

Here are two big democratic initiatives: Almost \$2 trillion spent on the American Rescue Plan; almost \$750 billion spent on what they call the Inflation Reduction Act, really the inflation expansion act.

Here is the bottom line: The result of the massive and colossal spending over those past 2 years has produced skyrocketing debt and rampant and raging inflation. We all hear about that inflation each and every day, just the fact that Americans have a tough time affording to live and exist today.

Right now, our country is on track to add almost \$20 trillion to the national debt over the next decade. We have heard these numbers quite a bit tonight. I don't think the American people can hear it enough.

By 2053, that number will reach almost 153 to \$154 trillion; trillion with a t. The interest costs on our national debt will amount to almost \$10.5 trillion for taxpayers over the next decade.

Now, again, to put that in perspective, the net interest cost over the previous 10 years was a little over \$3 trillion. Almost a month ago, our government officially hit its debt limit, and the Treasury Department is now using extraordinary measures to postpone a default.

Every household, every business, frankly, everybody, must balance their budget in order to survive. The Federal Government should be no exception.

The bottom line is something has got to change because Americans are getting crushed under the weight of President Biden's failed economic policies.

The good news is that House Republicans are committed to turning this around for American families, for American businesses, for the American people.

Just this week, I traveled to Yukon, Oklahoma, with my colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee to hear about the economic and regulatory challenges that they face each and every day. It is the second field hearing that the committee has held since taking back the House of Representatives.

In February, we traveled to West Virginia to hear from people in Appalachia. Republicans on the House Committee on Ways and Means are determined to hear directly from taxpayers, from businessowners, from farmers, from manufacturers, from energy producers about how we can ensure that we can get past all the hardships and all the hurdles. We want to ensure that everyone can succeed. The message that we have heard as a committee from the American people has been very clear: Americans have had enough.

In our commitment to America, House Republicans promise to work toward creating an economy that is strong. One of the most effective ways that we can do that is to reign in the out-of-control spending and get our government's fiscal house in order. We have got to find sensible, reasonable, and responsible solutions to addressing our Nation's economic and debt crisis.

As it stands now, we are leaving our children, our grandchildren, and the next generation with the bill and forcing them to live with potentially higher taxes and less opportunities unless we can do something and do something now.

From all of us on this side of the aisle, we want to make sure that Congress can come together, that we get our country's finances in order so that the promise of the American Dream

stays intact for families in my home State of Tennessee, in my district, and certainly across the Nation.

We can do it. We have got to work hard. We have got to reign in this out-of-control spending.

I thank you, Congressman JOHNSON, for organizing tonight's Special Order so we can speak directly to the American people about this crucial issue.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks; that was so well said. The gentleman is a great orator, and I love how he laid out the case methodically. That is what a former U.S. attorney from the Western District of Tennessee would do.

Facts are stubborn things, as John Adams said.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE), another brilliant lawyer and also my good friend.

Mr. CLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for yielding me the time. It is true, the wasteful spending, the tax hikes, and the excessive regulations of the Biden administration are crushing working families and small businesses across this country.

In particular, I rise tonight in support of the House Joint Resolution to denounce Biden's overly ambitious rule proposed for changing the definition of the waters of the United States, also known as WOTUS.

You know, agriculture is the number one industry in Virginia, and the Sixth District is proud to be home to more than 8,000 farms.

Narrowly defined water regulation is key to ensure that Virginia's agriculture industry can succeed and local industries can thrive. Unfortunately, the disastrous EPA is working to regulate every pond and every puddle, every stream and small creek with their new WOTUS regulation.

This new rule is going to negatively impact the vital goods and services that farmers, ranchers, and small businesses provide to the Commonwealth and across the Nation.

I have heard from farmers and property owners up and down my district. One thing is clear: They do not want to be told how to use and regulate their land by Joe Biden's radical EPA.

Imposing this overly broad and burdensome regulation will grant Biden's bureaucrats more arbitrary control over our rural communities, saddling folks with costly red tape.

It is far past time that we rescind the administration's new WOTUS ruling and protect America's farmers from this gross overreach of government power.

I thank the gentleman again for organizing this evening's Special Order.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks. The regulatory environment is just out of control, and that recent Supreme Court opinion of West Virginia v. EPA came out on our side, and I think that some of these agencies will

begin to have their wings clipped a bit, and hopefully this WOTUS rule will be handled appropriately. I thank the gentleman for highlighting that important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRECHEEN), one of the new stars of the Republican Party in the Congress, a former State senator there who now represents the Second District representing his people very well.

Mr. BRECHEEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't stand for a more important topic. This is what I believe is the greatest domestic threat that is facing this country. Our national debt in our last 40 years of inheriting prosperity from our parents and grandparents, and in the last many years we have been borrowing and stealing prosperity from our children and grandchildren because of an insatiable appetite for spending other people's money, which is the easiest thing to do in a manner that is not in line with our revenue.

There is a Founding Father who gave us a great warning. Thomas Jefferson told us, he said you should not allow your leaders to load you with perpetual debt. It is the same Thomas Jefferson who years later would make the comment which he defined in Latin terms as the "abusive state of man." He said: "... the fore-horse of this frightful team is public debt. Taxation follows that, and in its train wretchedness and oppression."

Our liberty as a Nation is in jeopardy. We hear trillions of dollars that are, you know, tossed around, and I don't think we really understand the size and scope of a trillion dollars. If I stood on this floor and at a second at a time I laid a dollar bill on this podium and I didn't stop to eat or sleep, taking a second at a time to lay out that dollar bill, it would take me 11 days—you would get tired sitting in that chair, Mr. Speaker—11 days watching me count out a million dollars.

If I was to lay out a dollar at a time on this table a second at a time, the time to lay it out and retrieve my hand, it would take me 31 years to lay out a billion dollars if I didn't stop to eat or sleep.

In order to get to a trillion dollars, it would take me 31,000 years, 31,000 years if I didn't stop to eat or sleep a second at a time.

We know what has happened in 2022: 40-year high record of inflation. The average Oklahoman spent \$7,000 more than they did the year prior to buy the exact same goods and services because of devaluation of the dollar.

That is the tip of the iceberg. That is what we see. That is what people are feeling. What is under the water that we can't see is this collision course that we are headed toward, this gigantic iceberg of the mountain of debt in our unfunded obligations.

Our national debt at \$31.5 trillion, every man, woman, and newborn child,

if you take that number and you divide it, every baby, including babies that open their eyes today and take in their first breath of air, owe \$94,000 just to pay off that \$31.5 trillion. They will pay it off through a lower standard of living. It is a hidden tax that we are going pass on to our kids because of our selfishness.

\$1.4 trillion has been a number that has kind of been in my head for the last few days.

□ 1915

The CBO number, the Congressional Budget Office number, said that this year's deficit is \$1.4 trillion. We will overspend \$1.4 trillion this year.

If you go back 40 years ago to 1983, that is exactly the size of our gross national debt in 1983. It was \$1.4 trillion. It took us 200 years as a nation to get to \$1.4 trillion. This year, we will overspend in 1 year that amount.

CBO is also giving us projections about where our interest rates are taking us. Within 7 years, what we spend that will be flushed down the toilet just in interest payments is going to match what we spend on the entire defense of our country.

If you take that interest rate out to 10 years from now, it is also \$1.4 trillion. There is the number yet again.

In 1983, after 200 years, the size of our gross national debt was \$1.4 trillion. This year, we will overspend by that amount, our annual deficit.

Ten years from now, that will be just the interest that will be flushed down the toilet, the annual debt service payments 10 years from now.

That is a 50-year spread of \$1.4 trillion. We are in trouble.

Our current gross national debt-to-GDP ratio is 129 percent. There are only 11 other countries in the world that have a higher debt-to-GDP ratio than we do, and these are the small countries, the small countries that aren't a world leader, a shining city on a hill.

Economists are predicting that Medicare will be insolvent in 2028. They actually bumped the number to 2028. We are only going to be able to pay out to 90 percent. There will be an automatic 10 percent cut in 2028 to Medicare if we do nothing.

In 2033, the actuaries are telling us Social Security becomes insolvent. There will be an automatic 25 percent cut to Social Security. Without anyone changing anything, that is what we face.

When you add the liabilities, the unfunded liabilities of Medicare, Social Security, what we owe veterans for pensions, Federal employees for pensions, other trust programs we have stolen out of over the last many years, and you add in addition our \$31 trillion, our sum total is \$120 trillion of unfunded liabilities debt. That came out last year with very little fanfare. Only the Heartland Institute picked it up.

That \$120 trillion total, they said if you put it against all assets in Amer-

ica, if you assessed it against the valuation of all property, all land, all homes, all stocks, and—they even said this—down to pieces of furniture, it is 86 percent of all wealth in America right now.

You will remember I talked through how long it would take to get to a trillion dollars. It would take you 31,000 years if you counted out a dollar at a time. It would take you 3.7 million years to get to \$120 trillion if you didn't stop to eat or sleep and you counted out a dollar at a time.

According to the U.S. Treasury Department in its February 2022 report that I just cited, in order for us to pay this all back, another way of looking at it, if every household would just send a million-dollar check to your Federal Government, that will make us square with the house as a nation.

Thomas Jefferson wasn't alone. Benjamin Franklin warned us, if we can gather it from his conversation with Elizabeth Powel when this Constitution was put together. When he was asked outside by Elizabeth Powel, as one of the leading members of Philadelphia society, after weeks of putting this Constitution together, she said: What have you given us, a republic or a monarch?

His response was: We have given you a republic if you can keep it.

That is important because Article IV, Section 4, of our U.S. Constitution guarantees to every State a republican form of government and to protect them from invasion.

We will stay on the republican conversation, the republic form, for a moment. Why is a republic important? Our Founders in that study, in the Constitutional Convention, they looked at all forms of government. They spent weeks. A republic was different—they knew it—than a democracy. Benjamin Franklin also described democracy. He said it is two wolves and a lamb voting on what they are going to have for lunch, but liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote.

What we are talking about is the liberty of this country. We are trading our liberty for debt and dependency. Liberty means something.

In the constitutional preamble, it says: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." It is a mission statement. We have a duty to live up to the mission statement that was handed to us 200 years ago, and we are missing the mark.

May God help us obtain the courage to put our national interests ahead of our own personal self-interests and squarely face these problems that are addressing the American people.

I will end by saying this: Martin Luther King, Jr., had a statement that my old boss, Tom Coburn, kind of tweaked, and he shortened it. It is this:

Cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right?

It is right to secure the blessings of liberty, not just for ourselves but our posterity.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, it is a harsh truth, and we have to address it. My colleague is right. As he implied there, the inevitable result of living beyond our means today is that we and our children inevitably are going to have to live below our means tomorrow.

We are going to have higher debt, higher taxes, less security, less opportunity. It is not going to be the same America that we have always known and valued. It is a harsh truth.

Mr. Speaker, I yield next to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN), my good friend.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I know normally this hour is taken up with speeches that I think are not bipartisan enough. I have decided to take this time to congratulate President Biden on his decision not to veto the bill we are sending over to him, which will prevent the District of Columbia from decreasing the penalties for severe crimes committed in this city.

I think what President Biden has done is finally recognized what a lot of us have been saying over the last few years. The District of Columbia is just plainly and simply not capable of self-governance at this time. I am glad President Biden agrees with us on that topic.

Right now, the District of Columbia has the second-highest spending per capita in the country on its schools, trailing only New York. Nevertheless, its test scores are abysmal.

The over 200 murders last year in the Nation's Capital is also an embarrassment, and that number has skyrocketed this year so far as of mid-February.

I will tell you, this is the Nation's Capital. There is no city we should care about more than the District of Columbia. It should be a shining light to represent the United States. People come here from all around the world.

I remember once I took a trip to Taipei, the large capital city of Taiwan. I was there with some friends. I asked our tour guide if there was anywhere at night we should not go, expecting there were some places we could not walk to without danger. We were told there was nowhere in Taipei we can't go. Nowhere in Taipei is not safe.

I was kind of embarrassed about my country because I thought, well, I was safe going to Taipei, but if I had visitors coming from Taiwan to Washington, D.C., I would be talking for quite a while, explaining all the places we couldn't go here.

I don't know whether people are aware that Vladimir Putin makes fun of our country for allowing such decline in the District of Columbia, not only how embarrassingly high our

crime rate is but how embarrassingly low our test scores in the schools are, how embarrassing it is to have so many homeless people wherever you look.

I hope President Biden builds on this new conversion in which he is admitting the District of Columbia is not capable, apparently, of setting appropriate punishments for crimes here.

I look forward to working with President Biden on perhaps things we can do to improve the decisions by the local school board on their schools, maybe make some changes in their welfare policies that lead to so many homeless people here.

In any event, like I said, I would like to end tonight's speeches on an upbeat message, thanking President Biden for his conversion to the understanding that the people here in the District of Columbia, who, by the way, he is not a perfect man, but they voted 6 percent for Donald Trump in the last election. I kind of wondered what type of people would do that, but they did.

In any event, hopefully, President Biden will be happy to meet with us and think of other things we can do to improve life in our Nation's Capital.

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and I point out, as he said, that our resolution blocking those crazy changes to D.C.'s criminal code was so strong that even Joe Biden couldn't agree to veto it. We are doing the right thing. We must continue, and we will.

I am grateful to my Republican colleagues for joining me for this Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. STEIL: Committee on House Administration. House Resolution 197. Resolution providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Eighteenth Congress; with an amendment (Rept. 118-8). Referred to the House Calendar.

#### PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mrs. LUNA (for herself, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr.

MOYLAN, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. POSEY, Mr. FRY, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. CARSON, Mr. STEUBE, Ms. MACE, Mrs. BOEBERT, Mr. DUNN of Florida, Mrs. McCLAIN, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART):

H.R. 1434. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty to receive self defense training once a month to combat sexual assault; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. OBERNOLTE, Mr. EMMER, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. POSEY, Mr. BALDERSON, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. PFLUGER, Mr. ROY, Mr. MILLER of Ohio, Ms. VAN DUYNE, Mr. FINSTAD, Mr. NEHLS, Mr. MAST, Mr. PENCE, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GOODEN of Texas, Mr. ARMSTRONG, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. JACKSON of Texas, Mr. ISSA, Mrs. BOEBERT, Mr. GUEST, Mr. ELLZEY, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. BOST, Mrs. HARSHBARGER, Mr. FEENSTRA, Mr. WILLIAMS of Texas, Mr. DONALDS, Mr. OWENS, Mr. WALBERG, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. GRIF-FITH, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mrs. BICE, Mr. STAUBER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. HERN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LATURNER, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. TURNER, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. MANN, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. CAREY):

H.R. 1435. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prevent the elimination of the sale of internal combustion engines; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia (for himself, Ms. ADAMS, Ms. SEWELL, Ms. CROCKETT, Ms. BROWN, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mrs. HAYES, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 1436. A bill to provide additional funding for scholarships for students at 1890 institutions; to the Committee on Agriculture.

By Mr. ROSE (for himself and Mr. SOTO):

H.R. 1437. A bill to authorize livestock producers and their employees to take black vultures in order to prevent death, injury, or destruction to livestock, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BERGMAN:

H.R. 1438. A bill to require certain non-profit and not-for-profit social welfare organizations to submit disclosure reports on foreign funding to the Attorney General; and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CASE, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. TAKANO, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN):

H.R. 1439. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to allow all eligible voters to vote by mail in Federal elections, to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for automatic voter registration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.